**Depression and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)**

30 points for your response submitted in the Drop Box

2 points your New Post comment in the Discussion Board plus 1 point for each of two substantive responses to other students for a total of 34 points for the week.

**Learning Objectives for this assignment**

1. Compare scientific knolwedge about two controversial psychological disorders and treatment with personal experience and opinions.

2. Access and explore reliable resources of information about psychological disorders

3. Discuss views of scientific knowledge of disorders and treatment with other students in the class.

**Introduction**

This assignment goes with material in Chaps.14 Psychological Disorders and Chap.15 Therapy in our textbook. Depression and ADHD provide us with excellent examples of the processes involved in identifying disorders and treatments. Along the way we will learn a lot about a topic that is definitely relevant to your life. Our textbook introduces some of the controversies involving the diagnosis and treatment of both. Both may have genetic links in some individuals but not all. This assignment will examine them more in depth. We can effectively treat many psychological disorders with psychotherapy, especially cognitive and behavioral therapies, but medication is often used to treat ADHD and Depression. Depression and ADHD may or may not require medication, but both should be treated with psychotherapy, according to today’s best practices. Knowing when medication is required is not yet a precise science and leads to much disagreement among professionals, the individuals diagnosed, and their families. Also, not all forms of psychotherapy are equally effective with all disorders, and this is especially true with ADHD and Depression.

For this assignment, you may choose either Depression or ADHD to watch a PBS Frontline video streamed from the PBS web site.

**ADHD is a controversial disorder, depression much less so.** It is very likely that a few of us in this class have been told at sometime they may have one of these disorders. Probably over half of the class has a family member or close friend who has been told that he/she has one of them. If you are going into a career that focuses on working with people, such as education, health care, social and mental health services, you most certainly will be working individuals affected by these disorders. With most disorders, the problem behavior is seen in all of us, but is seen to extreme degree in some.

**ADHD**

Many people say that ADHD is not a real disorder, and that normal childhood behavior is being pathologized (labeled as being a sign of something wrong or abnormal). Others say that ADHD is truly a psychological disorder, which means that one's behavior and/or emotions routinely interfere with successful functioning in one or more of our primary roles in life to a much greater degree than most people experience. Some of us have probably known of someone's child that has been diagnosed with either ADHD or bipolar disorder, and the number of children with these diagnoses has risen rapidly in the past several years. Why? ADHD also is diagnosed in adults and treated similarly as it is in children. This assignment will focus on children, but you may include adults in your research and response on this disorder.

There are controversies about the causes of ADHD. Some say it is caused by too much TV and video games, or too fast of a life pace in the U.S., or not enough discipline from the parents, or by poor school systems with too many kids being too regimented. Some say it is a genetically caused brain disorder involving problems in focusing attention. Others say it is caused by poor diet, food additives, or purposeful rebelliousness by the child who refuses to pay attention and follow rules. There is less controversy about the causes of bipolar disorder, but its diagnosis in children is very controversial for the same reasons as ADHD.

Treatments are also controversial. Commonly debated treatments include: medication; behavioral therapy for the child and family; reform of our educational system; remove sugar, wheat, or artificial ingredients from the diet; chiropractic; biofeedback on brainwave patterns; or various dietary supplements from mega vitamin doses to gold. Only medication and behavioral therapy have reliable evidence of benefits for some ADHD individuals, and only medication for Bipolar Disorder. The other treatments have weak and inconsistent evidence to support them.

**Depression in adults** is not always visible with sadness as the dominant trait. It can be displayed in many ways, and this becomes controversial when some us see personality traits as the cause while clinicians see depression. Medicate or use a talking therapy? Both help many people, but not necessarily the same people. Trying to decide who will benefit from a psychotherapy like cognitive-behavioral therapy, who needs medication, and who needs both is the cutting edge of research currently. Also, distinguishing between a disorder that needs treatment, and behaviors that the person just needs to get motivated to change is a big source of debate in families.

In this assignment we will get an overview of the behavioral characteristics that lead to a diagnosis of these two disorders, what we know about causes, treatments, and controversies. In the course of this we will get a good example of the process and difficulties of identifying any psychological disorder and developing effective treatments. Our primary source is streaming videos from PBS. The information and issues for ADHD and Depression covered are very current, although new medications have been approved for ADHD since that program was first aired in 2001. Updates on the disorder and the children in the video are included on the web site. Along the way I doing this you will also learn a little about Bipolar disorder in the Depression video, but this is not the focus of this assignment because I am not able to locate a suitable video about Bipolar Disorder for us to view online. Certainly you may include information you find on the web sites about Bipolar if you wish, but be sure to cover either ADHD or Depression as assigned. I understand that other disorders are of interest, but these assignment require topics that can meet specific learning objectives with the resources available. Learning about either of these disorders will serve the learning objective of understanding how normal behavior may evolve into extreme behavior that interferes with functioning, and the role of treatments involving either psychotherapy/counseling or medication, or even electroshock therapy for depression.

**The Assignment**

**1. View one of these streaming videos.** If you do not have streaming video capabilities on your home computer, it may be available on a library computer at your college or in one of your computer labs. If you are at one of those computers, ask the staff person if it has streaming video and audio. Your library may also have the program on video tape or DVD.

**Depression: Out of the Shadows** (90 minutes, 2008) lets us know a few individuals who have ha depression take various forms in their feeling and behaviors. It also describes the state of knowledge about causes and treatments of depression. The web site also includes a community outreach to motivate people to get a depression checkup, but this is not a required part for this assignment.<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/takeonestep/depression/>

**"Medicating Kids", a PBS Frontline documentary** (53 minutes; first aired in 2000 with updates in 2008) When accessing the program on PBS, be sure that you do not confuse “The Medicated Child” with “Medicating Kids”. They are two different programs on PBS focused on different issues. We are using “Medicating Kids”. “Medicating Kids” illustrates the disorder, the controversies, and the treatments of ADHD. The full program is available online in 6 video segments. There are also numerous summaries of the issues and controversies surrounding the disorder that you may read without watching the video. Browse through the web site and watch the video segments in order from left to right in the first row, then the second row (you will see what I mean when you get to the streaming video page). All six video clips will total 53 minutes:<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/medicating/> Be sure to read the updates from 2008 on the science and on the individual children seen in the program.

I suggest that you open a new browser window to go to the PBS web site rather than watching it through the Blackboard window.

**2. After watching one of the PBS videos, choose one additional web site related to that to review for either ADHD or Depression.**

* National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) is the federal government research arm for all mental health issues. It provides the state of knowledge about psychological disorders, their causes and treatments. It has a public oriented web site with information about the three disorders we are considering here. Choose the disorder you wish to focus on and peruse the information there:<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/index.shtml>
* National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) is a non-profit organization of consumers of mental health services including individuals who have been diagnosed with a disorder, their family and friends. It is reliable source of information about psychological disorders and treatment. You will see links to Depression and ADHD on this web page:<http://www.nami.org/Template.cfm?Section=By_Illness&lstid=328>
* The web site MentalHelp.Net is maintained by a community mental health center consulting organization near Cleveland, Ohio. It is highly regarded in the mental health field as a reliable source of information on mental health and psychological disorders. The web site is funded by private and federal funds to provide information to the public about psychological disorders. Being a private non-profit community mental health organization give it a very practical approach to the way the web site is set up and the information presented. You may find it more appealing the federal government's NIMH web site. They are equally reliable from my experience. Go to:<http://www.mentalhelp.net/> and you will see all three the disorders listed in the homepage "Featured Topics". Look for ADHD, Bipolar Disorder, Depression, and Disorders in Children for information as well as any news items on the web site related to these disorders. You may find information on many more disorders by selecting the top row link "Disorders and Issues".

**In your response to this assignment which is to be deposited in the Drop Box for this week**, cover the following points about either Depression or ADHD (write about only ONE disorder unless you really want to include both). Please aid my scoring of your work by identifying the sections clearly with numbers or labels in your response, which video you watched, and the web site you reviewed. You must demonstrate knowledge of the assigned resources to earn the points (the video and the web site). This need not be in APA format, just give it a label so I can see where you got the idea or information from. You are also invited to include you own observations of children and adults, and to compare this with the information in the resources.

**Section A:** Your view of Depression or ADHD before doing this assignment based on past experiences with your family, yourself, or others that you are comfortable sharing with us. Did you think these problems indicated a disorder or are we making normal childhood behavior into a disorder, known as "pathologizing normal behavior"? (3 points)

**Section B:** Describe your view of Depression or ADHD (not both) after viewing one of the videos and one of the web sites for this assignment. You must incorporate significant elements from the video and one of the listed web sites into your response (name each so I cannot miss seeing that you reviewed the required sources). Issues that you are required to address in this Section B:

1. Describe five points from the video you watched that seem to be the most important from your perspective. These may include controversies (15 points)

2. Is the problem behavior a disorder or is it normal behavior that is being "pathologized" for some reason? Explain how your view compares with the video and web site information. Why do some people see it differently than you do, as in not believing it is a disorder or vide-versa? (2 points)

3. What causes the disorder you selected? Compare what you thought caused it before doing this assignment and what has changed about your view of it now, if anything. This is a tough question and I do not expect you to have the one correct answer, but rather to demonstrate that you have watched the video, reviewed the web site, and thought about the disorder, and know the various possibilities for causes. It is like an essay question on an exam, so show me what you know. (2 points)

4. How is this disorder diagnosed and misdiagnosed? Is it over-diagnosed or under-diagnosed? Again, include relevant information from the assigned resources (2 points)

5. How should this disorder be treated, if at all? (3 points; Discuss only ADHD or Depression)

a. Should it involve stricter parenting (for a child), medication, diet change, nutritional supplements, chiropractic, homeopathy, just trying harder to behave and feel better, or other alternative therapies? What evidence is there of effectiveness of the various therapies?

b. Is there a role for counseling/psychotherapy for the individual, for the parents, or for the whole family? What evidence is there that a talking therapy (counseling) is effective? This requires knowledge of teh web sites listed above.

6. How does the scientific evidence about the causes, diagnosis and treatment compare with your views? You need not agree with the information in the resources, but you must demonstrate awareness and understanding of the relevant information in the resources and explain why your view is more valid than that information, if you believe it is. If you are wondering if there is much scientific evidence about these disorders and their treatments, use ProQuest or EBSCO for a peer-reviewed research journal search using the disorders as keywords. Don't forget to check the "full text" and "peer-reviewed/scholarly" boxes. You will see lots and lots of articles. (2 points)

7. What value has this assignment had for you if any? Be honest. If it has no value, I need to know that also for purposes of designing future assignments. (1 point)

Place your primary resonse in this week's Drop Box for 30 points; Post substantive comments in the Discussion Forum for 4 points .

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